

THE COMET.

BY F. T. COOPER.

JACKSON, MISS.

Saturday, January 18, 1879.

"BIGGER THAN IT LOOKS."

Our generous neighbor of the Clarion has paid our Comet the best compliment we have had, for which we thank him. He says the Comet "is bigger than it looks." That is what we would call a center shot, a plumb stroke on the nail's head. We have no ambition to print a big paper, but what we want to do is to get a heap in it. In other words, to make it "bigger than it looks."

The Kemper Herald acknowledges that it was frozen out during the late cold spell, and had to skip an issue. However, its types have thawed and it comes out again as usual to gladden its readers.

Hon. J. Ed. Bechen, a brother of our townsman, Mr. J. A. Bechen, was elected Speaker of the Missouri House of Representatives by the Democrats a few days ago.

Hon. Van H. MANNING has favored THE COMET with a copy of his speech on the Distribution of the Geneva Herald. We are also indebted to Hon. Charles E. Hooker for a consolidated copy of the speeches of Senators Lamar and Thurman, in reply to Blaine.

The flattering reception which THE COMET has received at the hands of its contemporaries of the Mississippi press has excited our profoundest gratitude. Almost without an exception our friends of the press have extended to us a cordial and friendly greeting. We shall endeavor to deserve their good opinion, and if we do not reproduce their too partial comments it is because we do not wish to lay ourselves open to the charge of egotism.

LT. COLONEL FRED GRANT, with a salary of \$275 a month, has been for the last three or four years conducting a vigorous campaign at the hotels in Chicago. He has been given two years leave of absence in Europe—the pay going on all the same—in order that he may have a needed rest and recuperate his exhausted energies. It is probably as good an arrangement as the Government could make with Fred, but it is hard on the Chicago hotels.

We desire to repeat that THE COMET is to be run strictly on the cash system. We would be happy if everybody would take a notion to subscribe for it. But it is against our theory of a permanent and successful business to force it upon anybody. If a man takes the paper and pays for it we want him to feel that he gets something for his money. In any case, we want him to be a party to the contract. We want his consent to the arrangement. The practice which prevails to a considerable extent among newspapers of sending their papers without being authorized to do so, and then following it up with a bill, is wrong, and tends more than any other one thing to lower the dignity and independence of the press. We shall not engage in this style of circulating THE COMET. A forced circulation is little better than no circulation.

THE COMET will go regularly to those subscribers who have paid for it in advance, and stop when the time is out, unless renewed. The postage will be prepaid as the law requires, and there is nothing left for the subscriber to do but to receive it from the postoffice. No bill is going to come after it one, two, three, or ten years hence. There is no necessity of notifying the publisher that you can take it any longer. The paper will stop itself as soon as the time paid for expires, unless it is renewed.

We make this explanation because we have on our list a large number of names whose paper has been paid for by friends—friends to the subscribers and friends to THE COMET—and to relieve all parties of any apprehension that we are disposed to force THE COMET on them whether they wish it or not.

THE PRIZE POEM.

We had permitted our expectation to run high from the offer of the New Orleans Times for a prize poem expressive of southern gratitude for the noble manifestation of our Northern, Eastern and Western brethren upon the occasion of our great tribulation and suffering. It was a grand theme truly, and we looked for a grand utterance. In common with most people we felt a pang in the final outcome. The poem may be the thing most needed, but it is not translating into plain English. The Holly Spirit's South comes nearer expressing our estimate of it than we could do if we tried, and we, therefore, reproduce the South's criticism.

The poem, entitled "Andromeda Unchained," written in answer to a prize offered by the New Orleans Times for the best poem expressive of Southern gratitude for the noble manifestation of our Northern, Eastern and Western brethren upon the occasion of our great tribulation and suffering, is a grand theme truly, and we looked for a grand utterance. In common with most people we felt a pang in the final outcome. The poem may be the thing most needed, but it is not translating into plain English. The Holly Spirit's South comes nearer expressing our estimate of it than we could do if we tried, and we, therefore, reproduce the South's criticism.

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THE LATE EPIDEMIC.

THE CLAMOR FOR AN EXTRA SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

And Governor Stone's Action About It.

There has been a vast amount of unthought and wholly undeserved censure upon Governor Stone for his course during the late epidemic of yellow fever in Mississippi. The popular idea at the time was that he ought to do something very how without regard to consequences. He was called upon to lay violent hands upon the State Treasury, or to pledge the State's credit for a loan of some \$50,000 or \$100,000. When it was found that he could not be induced to attempt an unlawful thing of this kind, a powerful clamor went up for an extra session of the Legislature. Many of the newspapers lifted their voices and turned all their pressure upon him. A prominent committee of citizens with a portion of the Board of Health summoned him by telegraph from Iuka to Jackson, to hear their potent reasons for some such step. This committee of respectable doctors and citizens seemed to have unbounded faith in their own conclusions and powers of persuasion, and, apparently, considered that the only thing necessary to capture the Governor was to bring him within their range of their forcible arguments. Probably they thought that the Governor had never seen Mr. Street's letter, and that the luminous epistle that dropped off of one of our new brick walls into the Clarion's columns from our own Court Land, had escaped him. Perhaps, they imagined that he didn't know that there was a dreadful epidemic sweeping over the State, and had never given the subject a thought. However, when he met them to consult about it they found that he had given to the whole subject a far more mature consideration than any of them had; and as a result of that consultation, instead of the Committee capturing the Governor, the Governor captured the committee.

In another place we print to-day a private correspondence between Governor Stone and the Hon. J. H. Field, of Columbia, written, as will appear from the dates, about the time our trouble was greatest. This correspondence was never intended by either of the parties to it for publication, and, perhaps, we violate to some extent a trust in giving it to the public now. But as the people want the truth, and as the letters speak the truth, we risk the displeasure of the writers for the sake of the sound, statesmanly, and genuinely philanthropic sentiments which the letters breathe. Here will be found the reasons why Governor Stone did not convene the Legislature, and, in the absence of legislative authority, was not guilty of the folly of attempting to use the State's money. They are impregnable and unanswerable, and leave nothing more to be said in his defense on that point.

Now let us look at the result of Governor Stone's action, and see whose head was the largest and whose heart was the warmest during that depressing period. If the men who clamored for the assembling of the Legislature had controlled our destinies at that critical juncture the members would have been called together in extraordinary session, and for the sake of the argument we will suppose that a quorum could have been gotten together in the course of two or three weeks, though that is doubtful. Then another week would go by in organizing and wrangling about the appropriation. Finally, however, we will grant for the sake of argument only, that they would have passed an act appropriating \$50,000 or \$100,000 from the State. There would have followed the selection of disbursing committees, and this would take another week. Here is a month or more gone before any relief the Legislature might have consented to give, could possibly have reached the sufferers; meantime, the victims were dying for the want of timely aid.

All the Legislature was expected to do or could have done was to appropriate some fifty or a hundred thousand dollars, and this at the fearful cost of a fatal delay, to say nothing of the additional cost of thirty or forty thousand dollars to pay the expenses of the extra session. What sort of relief could this paltry sum have given to our stricken fellow-citizens? Why Vicksburg alone received from charitable sources nearly two hundred thousand dollars. And she received this munificent sum as her wants developed the need of it in time to be of solid service. Other stricken communities met with the same timely and open-handed and open-hearted generosity.

Governor Stone placed himself on the position that the calling of an extra session of the Legislature, for the purpose indicated, was the most senseless and the most cruel thing he could do for our suffering and dying people. It would say to the charitable world that the State of Mississippi, if you gave her a month to mature her programme, was going to take care of her own sick, and thus turn the opportune golden current of God-like benevolence away from her shores. Such aid as the State could give would be wholly insufficient, and it was a starting impossibility to procure such aid in time.

Thus, by his firmness and devotion to the best interests of the people, as well as to the Constitution and laws of the State, Governor Stone saved to the sufferers in Mississippi hundreds of thousands of dollars during their distress and shielded the taxpayers from an additional burden of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Notwithstanding the result has so clearly shown the wisdom of Governor Stone in refusing to convene the Legislature during the dark period of the epidemic, there are yet parties who seem to have a sublime faith in an extra session as a panacea for all ills present or prospective. The Board of Health has come to the front again with a recommendation for an extra session to consider the subject of quarantine; the newspapers have opened their rosettes; and the brick wall member has illuminated the Hinds County Gazette with a beautiful column of pretty writing to show that the extra session should be had by all

means, to prevent the sale of property left the first of next March. If our honorable and worthy friend and townsman had shown any respect for the law as it stands, or for the Attorney General's opinion, he would have seen that property could not be sold before the first of March, and that the letter of Attorney General Calhoun on the subject virtually nullified tax-payers of all damages till that date. And this letter did not cost the people a cent, whereas the extra session would have cost from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Lastly, and very recently, our noble General West launches a broadside on the Governor. General West deals in broadsides. He don't write often, but when he does he shoots out the charge of a cumbler. He goes down to the profoundest depths of things, and ascends to the loftiest points. On this occasion he has undertaken to prove by astrology that we are entering upon a series of dire calamities, and he appeals to the Governor to call an extra session to avert them. What strikes us as the lame feature of General West's argument is that members of our Legislature are not astrologers, and if they were they would probably not know how to go to work to fight against the decrees of astrology.

Judge Wiley P. Harris, when he catalogued the misfortunes that might be in store for our State, declared that "the greatest of all these would be the assembling of the Legislature." We agree with him. There is not now and has not been since the last adjournment any sufficient reason for an extraordinary session of the Legislature. The people by a large majority have only just voted to convene sessions, and for the Governor, in the face of this recent expression of the popular will, and in the absence of a well defined necessity, to modify their act, would be to say the least of it, a tremendous stretch of Executive presumption.

THE COMET.

WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT.

A prominent and leading citizen of Holly Springs, says: "Send me your Comet, and rest assured of my hearty co-operation."

A valued friend at Grenada writes: "Find enclosed \$2 for the Comet. I will bring the paper to the attention of our people, and doubt not you will get a good number of subscribers at this point."

An enthusiastic gentleman in Meridian exclaims: "The Comet forever. Send her along, and mark me down for a club of ten."

A life-long friend in the Southern part of the State writes: "The Comet deserves a brilliant success, and it shall have a good circulation in my district if I can influence my friends."

We could quote several columns of similar expressions from private letters, but this will do. We will be pardoned, however, for publishing the subjoined congratulatory note from one of our fair ladies of Jackson. The letter is anonymous, and we are compelled to break over an old newspaper rule to get it before the public. But we don't mind that in a case of this sort. Here it is:

JACKSON, January 11, 1879.

Will God, Cooper accept the sincere congratulations of a lady friend upon the successful advent of the Comet upon the journalistic horizon. I heartily trust that it may find its editorial residence, and not only attract a host of admirers, but have power to attract a golden shower from appreciative subscribers. It must be a success, for however rapid, light or erratic its flight, it will surely not fly from its orbit while its creative power is not only a Comet, but a Comet.

Here now follows an expression from a hard student in Brookhaven.

Brookhaven, Miss., January 13, 1879.

DEAR COOPER, We in the "pious woods" have reason to be proud, especially in this dark hour of ours. In the first place, we didn't have any yellow fever; in the next place we did have Christmas. Then we had the loveliest show that ever was seen in this or any other country. Then we had New Year's day. But what I wanted to say, particularly, was, just but not least of all good things, THE COMET dropped down upon us to the surprise and gratification of quite a goodly number of our devoted citizens. What I mean by devoted is devoted to the Comet, or rather in many respects to its editor. They, the people, believe he, the Comet, has many good traits, although he may have some faults. But that is all that may be hoped for in this world. We are in the "pious woods" have reason to be proud, especially in this dark hour of ours. In the first place, we didn't have any yellow fever; in the next place we did have Christmas. 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